

ATARI® 2600™



ALPHA BEAM^{*} WITH ERNIE⁺

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3-7



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+ Indicates trademark of MUPPETS, INC.

ATARI AND CHILDREN'S COMPUTER WORKSHOP™ * PRESENT:

Educational games featuring the lovable Sesame Street Muppets and other wonderful, whimsical characters. The creators of Sesame Street, Electric Company, and 3•2•1 Contact have teamed up with the creators of the world's most popular video games.

ATARI/CCW™ * games are designed by writers, artists, programmers, educators, psychologists, and lots of kids!

OUR FORMULA:

One Part Creative Magic

One Part Technical Wizardry

One Part Educational Know-How

Dynamic, Child-Appropriate Video Games!

ATARI/CCW Video Games Provide:

- Family Play
- Continuous Challenge
- Long-Term Fun
- Nonviolent Play
- Opportunity for Cooperative Play, Individual Play, and Competitive Play
- Appeal to Both Girls and Boys

This Video Game Product was developed by ATARI, INC. and the CHILDREN'S COMPUTER WORKSHOP.

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★ NOTE TO PARENTS

The ALPHA BEAM game provides children with an exciting outer space setting in which they can practice important prereading skills such as:



1) Matching identical letters.



2) Matching upper case letters with their corresponding lower case letters.



3) Discriminating between confusing letters.

ALPHA BEAM is unique in that it includes opportunities for cooperation. When you play ALPHA BEAM with your child you can foster cooperative play by talking to him or her. As you play, say things like, "Which letter should we pick up first?" and, "Where should we put the letter A?" Encourage your child to talk about the game also.

As you read this manual, you will occasionally see this symbol:



The symbol will be followed by suggestions to help you and your child get the most fun out of playing ALPHA BEAM.

a

p

m



★ SETTING UP

HOW TO USE YOUR ATARI® KID'S CONTROLLER

Use your ATARI® KID'S CONTROLLERS to play ALPHA BEAM.

For a one-player game, plug an ATARI KID'S CONTROLLER into the LEFT controller jack at the back of your ATARI 2600™ console. (See **Figure 1**.) For a two-player game, the player who operates the top shuttle uses a controller plugged into the LEFT jack and the player who maneuvers the bottom shuttle uses a controller plugged into the RIGHT jack.



Figure 1 — Plugging in the Controller

You will find two keypad overlays included with this cartridge. These colorful overlays will help your children select and use appropriate buttons. Slip the overlay tabs into the slots at the top and bottom of your ATARI KID'S CONTROLLER, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 — Keypad Overlay

NOTE: Always turn the console POWER switch OFF before inserting or removing an ATARI Game Program™ cartridge. This will protect the electronic components and prolong the life of your ATARI 2600 Video Computer System console.

HOW TO USE THE ATARI 2600 CONSOLE CONTROL SWITCHES

POWER ON/OFF SWITCH

After you have inserted the Game Program cartridge, press the **POWER ON/OFF** switch to **ON**.

GAME SELECT SWITCH

ALPHA BEAM contains 12 exciting game levels. Each level is more challenging than the previous level. Find the game number you want to play in the **GAME MATRIX** on the back cover. Press the **GAME SELECT** switch until the game number appears at the lower left of the television screen. (See *Figure 3*.) The number on the right indicates the number of players for that game. For a detailed description of each game, see **GAME PLAY**.



Game Number Player Number

Figure 3 — Selecting a Game

GAME RESET SWITCH

After you have chosen the game level you want to play, press **GAME RESET** to begin the game. You can also press **GAME RESET** during game play to start the game over.

NOTE: Pressing **GAME RESET** during a game will restart that game variation with a new set of letters.

DIFFICULTY SWITCHES

RIGHT and **LEFT DIFFICULTY** switches are not used in this game.

TV TYPE SWITCH

Set the **TV TYPE** switch to **COLOR** to play the game on a color TV. Set this switch to **B/W** to play on a black and white TV.

★ A READ-ALoud STORY

ERNIE THE ASTRONAUT

"Space is terrific," said Ernie the astronaut as he flew his rocket ship past the beautiful ringed-planet Saturn. "But I'm really getting homesick and I miss my old buddy Bert. I think I'll turn around and start for home. I'd better take a look at my trusty space map first so I won't get lost."



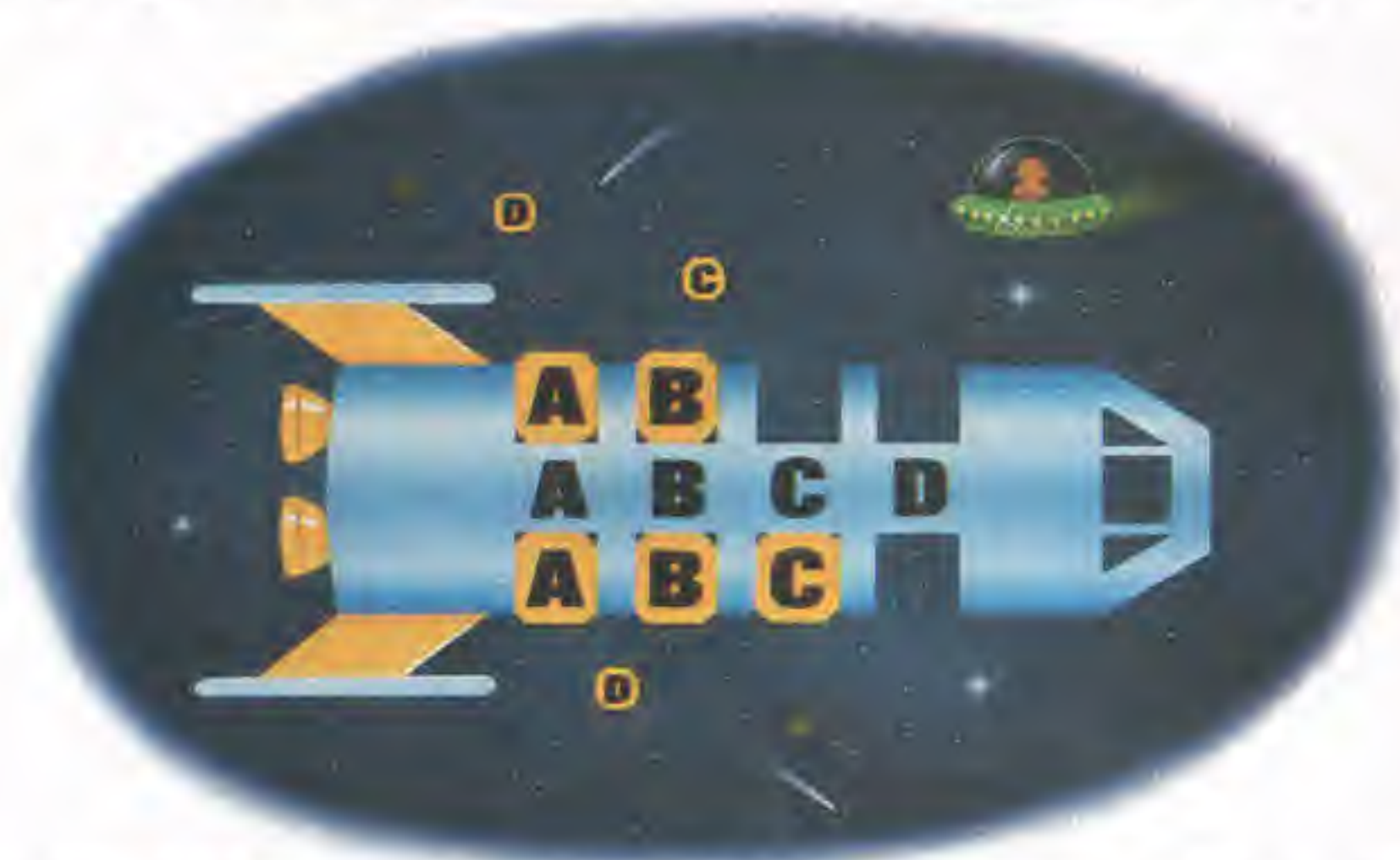
But as Ernie unfolded the map, his glance fell upon the fuel gauge of his rocket ship.

"Uh oh! I'm almost out of fuel!" Ernie began to worry. "I hope I can make it to the next refueling station in time."

Just as his ship coasted to a stop, Ernie spotted the Alpha Beam Fuel Station. He put on his space suit and got into his space shuttle to go collect the fuel for his rocket.

"Boy am I lucky," he said. "I just made it!"

First, Ernie flew his shuttle over his rocket fuel bays to see what kind of fuel he needed. Then, he flew to the fuel station and carefully selected the right fuel tank for each fuel bay on his ship.



"The 'A' fuel tank goes in the 'A' docking bay, the 'B' fuel tank goes in the 'B' docking bay, and so on," said Ernie. "If you're planning to fly a rocket ship through outer space, you've got to know your ABC's!"

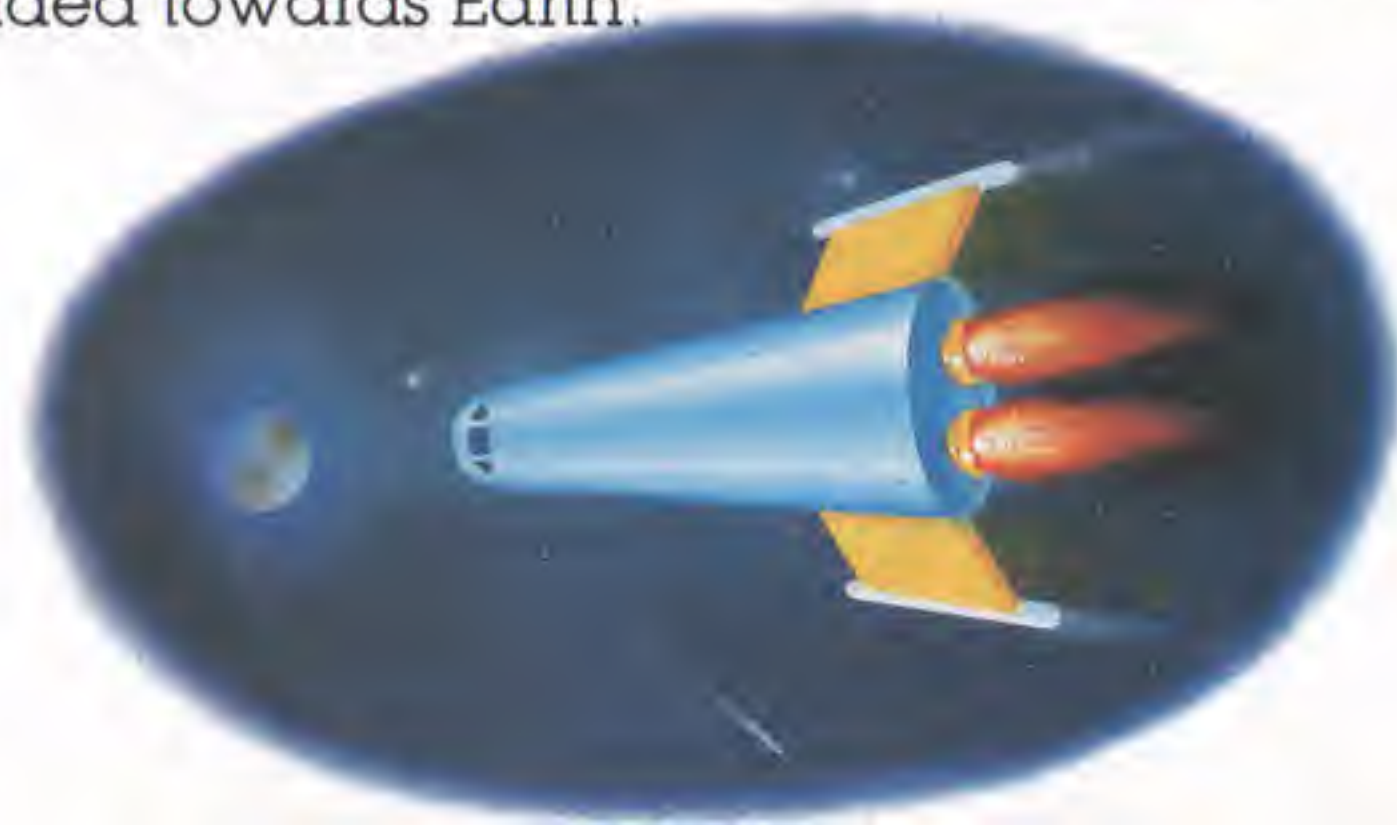
Ernie knew he had to fill up the fuel bays as quickly as possible because, according to his automatic countdown clock, his ship was set to blast off in a few seconds.



"Nine...eight..." ticked the clock. (Ernie loaded the first fuel tank.) "Seven...six...five...four..." (The 'B' and 'C' tanks were loaded.)

"Am I loading the fuel correctly?" Ernie wondered. "Will my ship make it all the way back to Earth?"

"Three...two..." (Ernie loaded the last tank and jumped aboard his rocket just as the fuel bays closed.) "One! Blast off!" The great rocket ship headed towards Earth.



"I sure hope I make it," said Ernie. "I really miss my old buddy Bert!"

Ernie began to feel better as he passed Saturn again and saw Jupiter straight ahead.



"If I can just get to Mars," he thought. "Earth is only one stop away."

But Ernie's ship started to slow down. He looked at the control panel and saw that his fuel indicator was nearing the empty mark again.

"Oh no!" he groaned. "I'm running out of fuel. Now I'll never make it all the way home. I'll never see my buddy Bert again!"

"What do you mean, Ernie?" asked Bert. "Of course you'll see me again. I'm just going to the kitchen to make oatmeal for breakfast."

Ernie opened his eyes and realized that he was safe in his own room. His toy rocket had fallen off his bed and was lying on the floor.



"Boy, did I ever have a crazy dream, Bert!" laughed Ernie with relief. "You'll never believe it, not in a million light-years!"

★ GAME PLAY



NOW PLAY ALPHA BEAM...HERE'S HOW:

Oh no! Ernie's rocket ship is out of gas! Help Ernie get home by filling up his rocket and making it blast off!

OBJECT OF THE GAME:

Beam the lettered fuel tanks that are floating in space into the docking bays of Ernie's rocket ship.

GET READY TO PLAY:

Follow the directions in SETTING UP to plug in the KID'S CONTROLLER, to use the keypad overlay, and to select a game level.

SHUTTLE MOVEMENT

To move your space shuttle left, press the arrow that points left on your keypad overlay.

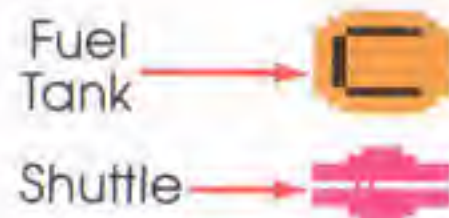


To move your space shuttle right, press the arrow that points right on your keypad overlay.



BEAM LETTER TO SHUTTLE

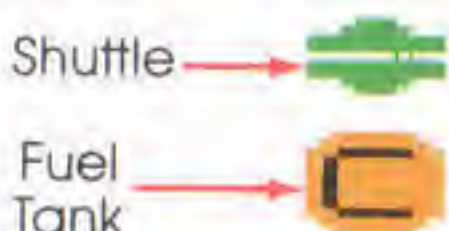
If you control the top shuttle, move your shuttle directly *under* a letter and press the beam button on your overlay that *points up*.



Up



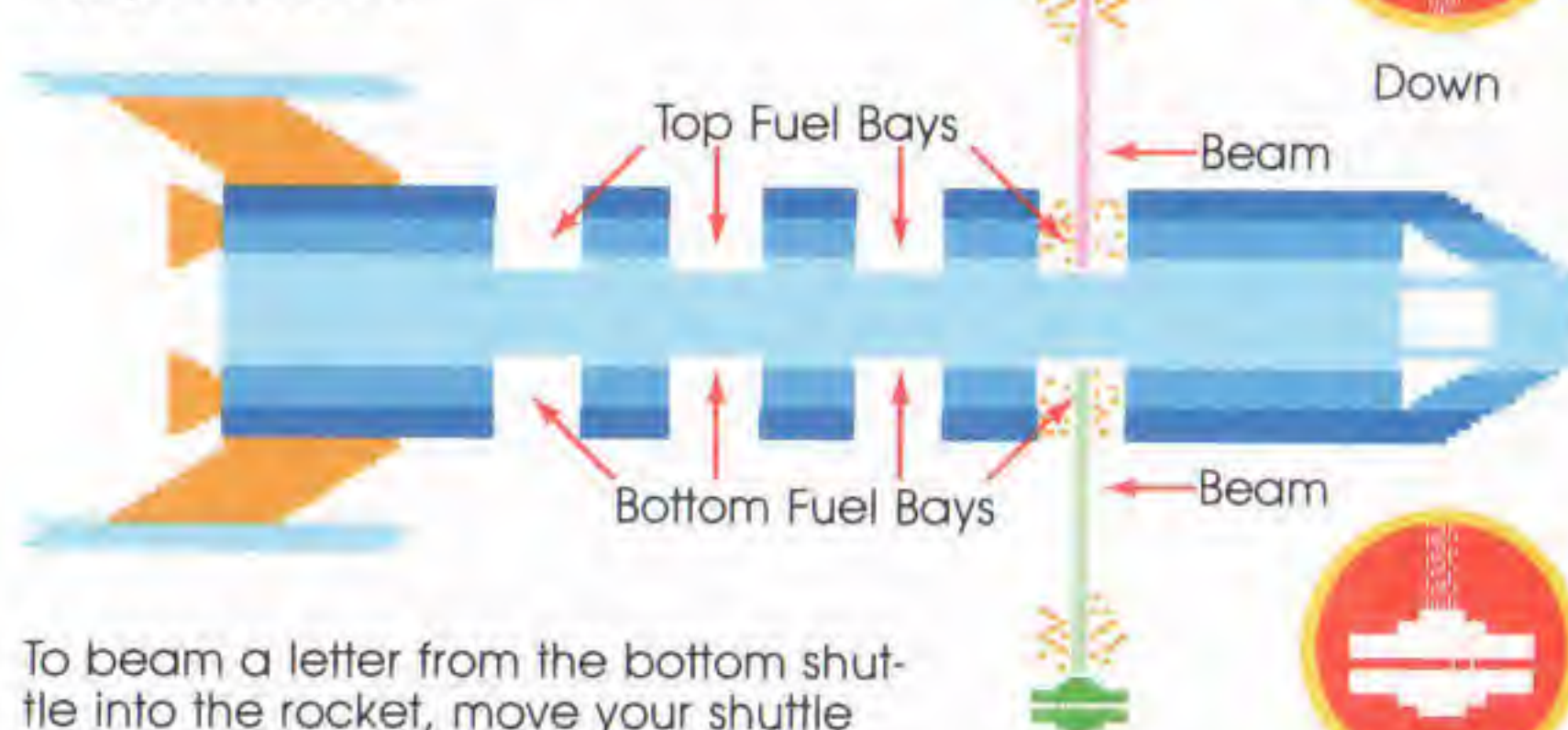
If you control the bottom shuttle, move your shuttle directly *over* a letter and press the beam button on your overlay that *points down*.



Down

BEAM LETTER FROM SHUTTLE TO ROCKET

To beam a letter from the top shuttle into the rocket, move your shuttle over a fuel bay and press the beam button that *points down*.



Down

To beam a letter from the bottom shuttle into the rocket, move your shuttle *under* a fuel bay and press the beam button that *points up*.



As your child learns to maneuver the shuttlecraft, you may want to give him or her some step-by-step guidance. Try saying:

- "First move your shuttle to the letter."
- "Next, beam the letter onto the shuttle."
- "Next, move to the docking bay."
- "Now, beam the letter onto the rocket ship."



Up

GAME VARIATIONS

ALPHA BEAM contains 12 levels of game play. Games 1 and 2 are for one player only, while Games 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 11 have one-player and two-player versions. Games 6, 7, 8, and 12 are two-player games only. Remember, when pressing **GAME SELECT**, the numeral on the lower left of the screen indicates game number while the numeral on the lower right indicates player number. Below are detailed descriptions of each game level. For quick reference, use the **GAME MATRIX** on the back cover.

GAMES 1 and 2: PRACTICE GAMES

1



2



Practice beaming letters onto your shuttlecraft and then into the rocket fuel bays. When you want to pick up fuel, press the right or left arrow on your keypad overlay. Your shuttle will automatically center under the nearest fuel tank. When you are ready to load the fuel on the rocket, press the right or left arrow to automatically center your shuttle over the closest fuel bay. The letters on the fuel tanks and on the rocket side are all the same letter. **Game 1** uses all upper case letters while **Game 2** uses all lower case letters. Take as much time as you want. Each time you fill up Ernie's rocket, it blasts off toward earth. Welcome home! Had enough practice? Now try a more challenging game.



In practice games, young children might need some help getting started. Say to your child, "Point to the letter you want to pick up and show me which way (left or right) you want to move to get it." This is also a good opportunity to talk about the names of the letters on the screen.

3



GAMES 3, 4, and 5

Match the letters in the sky with those on the side of the rocket. The four letters on the side of the rocket are in alphabetical order while the four lettered tanks in the sky are scrambled. When you beam the correct letters from the sky into the rocket bays, you will be putting them in proper alphabetical order.

4



You must carefully center your shuttle under and over the letters and rocket bays. If you try to beam a letter into a bay where it doesn't match, it won't go in and you'll hear a loud buzz.

5



All the letters in **Game 3** are upper case, and all letters in **Game 4** are lower case. In **Game 5** all the letters on the side of the ship are lower case while the letters in the sky are upper case. Each time you fuel up Ernie's ship, it blasts off for home. What a blast!

GAMES 6, 7, and 8

6



7



8



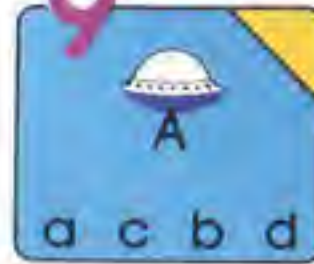
Now you and your partner must work together to put the same letter pairs in the top and bottom fuel bays of the rocket. (See **Figure 4**.) There are no letters printed on the rocket side so you decide which letters go where. Once a letter is beamed into a bay, the matching letter will only go into the adjoining bay. As soon as you fuel up the ship, it blasts off and you fly all the way home!

Game 6 uses all upper case letters and **Game 7** uses all lower case letters. In **Game 8**, the player operating the top shuttle selects from upper case letters, while the player operating the bottom shuttle selects from lower case letters.



Figure 4 — Cooperative Game 8

9

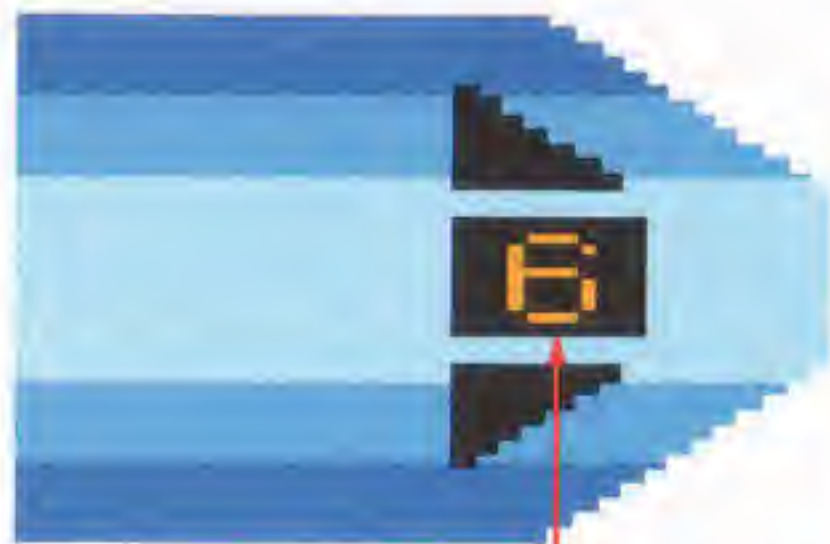


GAME 9

Match upper case letters in the sky with lower case letters on the ship before the countdown reaches one.

Game 9 is a timed game. See the number in the window of the rocket nose? (See **Figure 5**.) This is your countdown timer. You must fuel up Ernie's rocket as the countdown goes from nine to one. When the countdown reaches one, the rocket doors close, and the rocket blasts off.

You get as far as Saturn if each player docks *one* tank in the right bay. If each player docks *two* tanks correctly, you get to Jupiter. You'll reach Mars if each player puts *three* tanks in the right bays. And you'll fly all the way to home sweet planet Earth if all *four* tanks are correctly placed! Welcome home, Ernie! (See *Figure 6*.)



Countdown Timer

Figure 5 — Timed Game



Figure 6 — Ernie gets Home

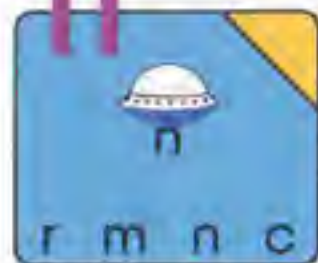
10



GAMES 10 and 11

Now each player must choose among five lettered tanks in the sky to match four lettered bays in the rocket.

11



Don't be surprised if the letters in the sky do not match the letters on the rocket. Each time you beam a letter from the sky it is replaced by the next letter in the alphabet. For example, beam a "K" onto your shuttle and it is replaced by an "L" in the sky; beam that "L" onto your shuttle and it's replaced by an "M." When you take the letter "Z" it is replaced by an "A." If you don't want to keep a letter that you beam

onto your shuttle, simply beam another letter aboard your shuttle and the one you don't want will disappear into the air! You can beam through as many letters as you like this way until you have the letter you need to fill in the rocket bay.

All letters in **Game 10** are upper case; all letters in **Game 11** are lower case. You have more time to dock your letters in **Game 10** than in **Game 11**. In both games, the countdown starts at nine, and when it reaches one, your ship blasts off! How far will you get? As in **Game 9**, that depends upon how many fuel bays you filled correctly.



You may want to talk about the concept of alphabetical order with your child. Encourage him or her to think about each letter on the screen and ask, "What letter comes next in the alphabet?"

12



GAME 12

You and a partner beam matching letters into pairs of adjoining rocket bays. All upper case letters float above the rocket, while all lower case letters float below it. When you take a letter from the sky, it is replaced by the next letter of the alphabet. So, although you and your partner may not start out with matching letters, you can work together to create letter pairs by replacing letters in the sky until you make a match. The clock on the rocket ship will give you a quick countdown, so work fast and see how far you can make that rocket go when it blasts off!

GAME 12: SUPERCHALLENGE

When you've mastered matching letters randomly, try a more challenging game. See how fast you and your partner can spell these words together:

HOME	BERT	STAR	SHIP	FAST	DOCK
MOON	MARS	ZOOM	BEAM	FUEL	GAME

You can also make your own list of words with four letters or ask your parent or friend to make one for you.

★ MORE ALPHABET FUN



SPACE STATION XYZ

Jumping Jupiter! There are lots of letters at the Alpha Beam fuel station. Can you find all the letters?



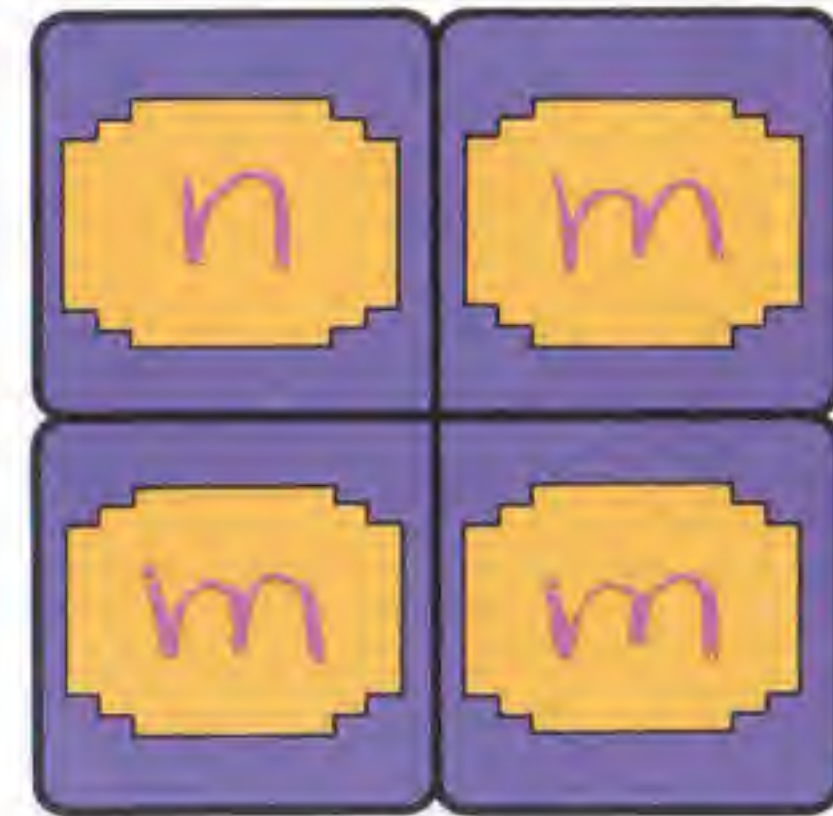
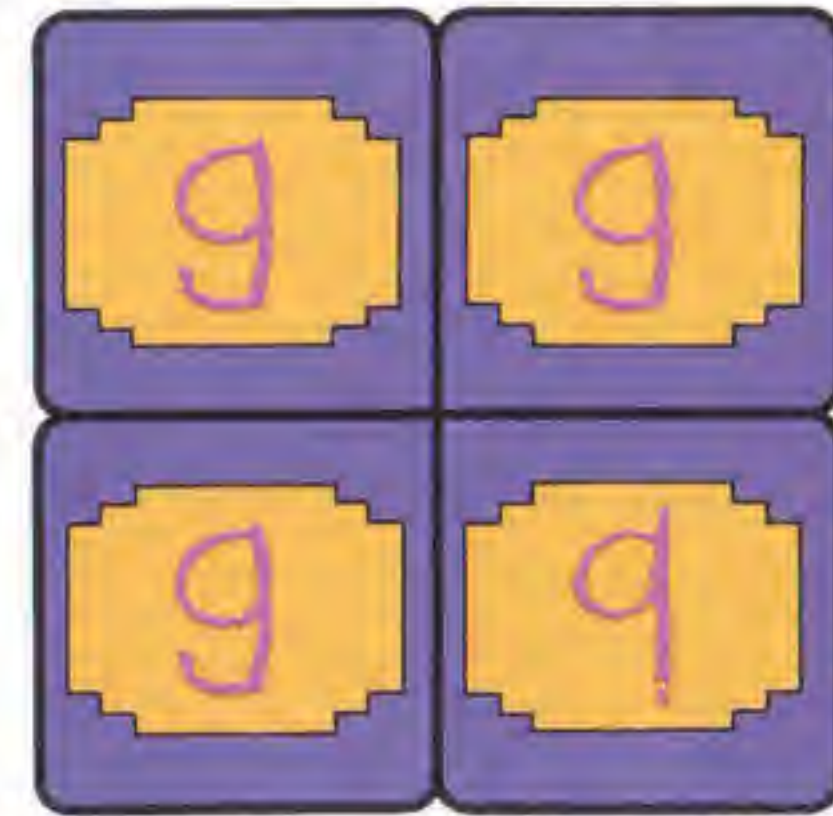
THE SHUTTLE FLEET

Look! There are five shuttles in the fleet.
Four shuttles are the **same**.
Which one is **different**?



WHICH LETTER DOESN'T BELONG?

In each picture there are four fuel tanks. Three of the fuel tanks have the same letter. One doesn't. Point to the letter in each picture that doesn't belong.



OUTER SPACE BUDDIES

Ernie made a friend in outer space. Draw a picture of his new friend. Color the picture.



FUEL IT UP!

Ernie's rocket ship needs fuel fast! You can help. Draw a line from each letter on the spaceship to the letter it matches in space.

g

d

m

a

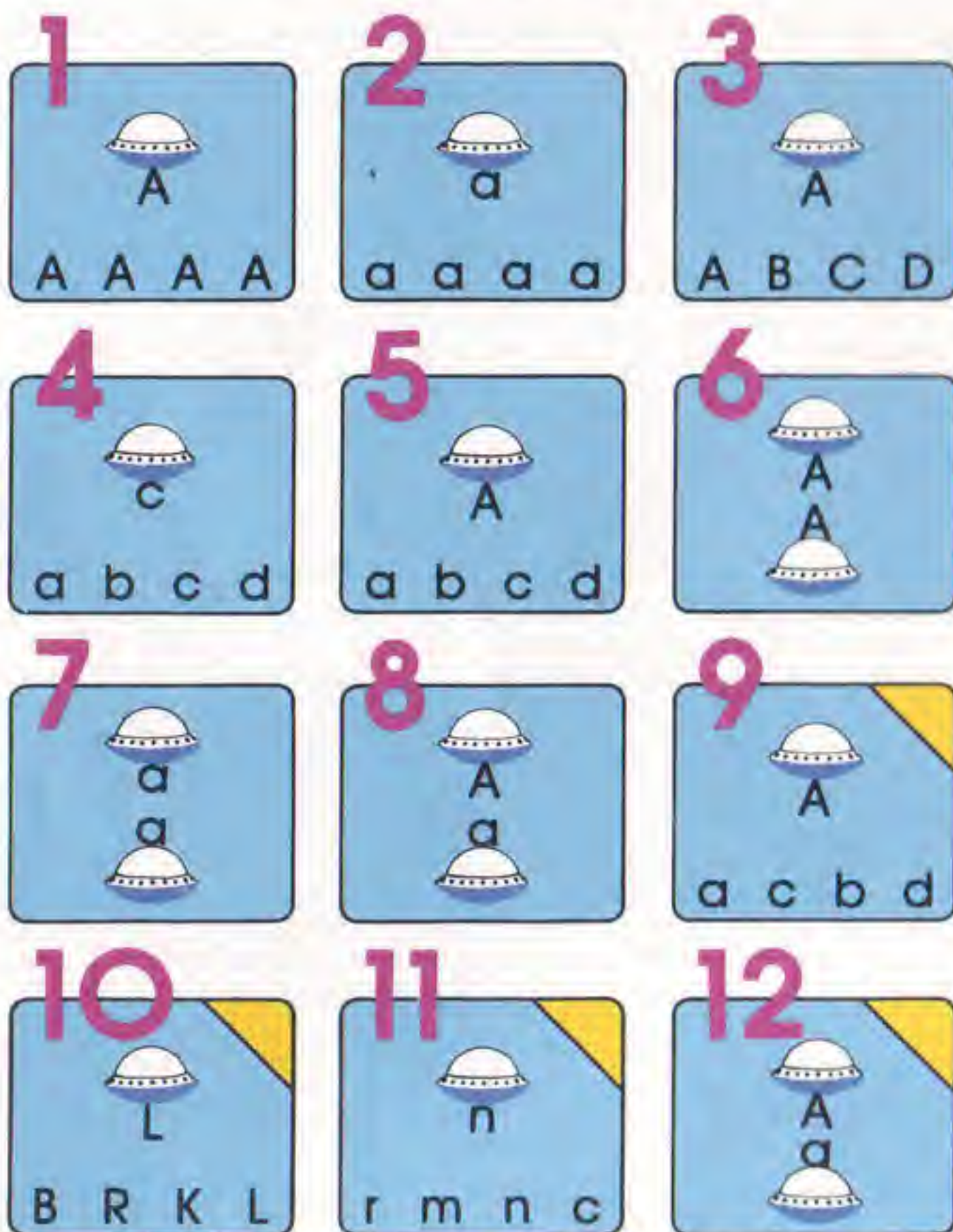
A

M

G

D

GAME MATRIX



TIMED GAME: Countdown 9 to 1

Games 1 & 2: One-Player Games

Games 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, & 11: One-Player & Two-Player Games

Games 6, 7, 8, & 12: Two-Player Cooperative Games



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